

Message Text

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EXDIS TOSEC 935

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR,CH

SUBJECT: INR SURVEY OF ANTI-US PROPAGANDA IN PRC MEDIA

1. WE DECIDED TO TAKE A LOOK AT THE TREATMENT OF THE US IN PRC MEDIA IN THE PAST SIX-NINE MONTHS, ESPECIALLY SINCE THE NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS (NPC) IN JANUARY, TO SEE WHETHER IT HAS BECOME MORE, OR LESS, ANTI-US. WE:

--(A) FOUND IT, FOR THE MOST PART, ROUTINE AND LOW-KEY; THE STANDARD FARE CONSISTED OF REPLAYED FOREIGN REPORTAGE--REPEATED WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT DISTORTION WHEN THE SOURCE WAS WESTERN AND EDITED TO REMOVE THE VITRIOL WHEN THE SOURCE WAS COMMUNIST; US POLICY WAS DEPICTED AS MISTAKEN, BUT NO ASPERSIONS WERE CAST ON US MOTIVES.

--(B) NOTED NO REVERSION TO THE HARSH POLEMICIZING THAT CHARACTERIZED PEKING'S PROPAGANDA BEFORE PRESIDENT NIXON'S 1972 VISIT; BUT WERE UNABLE TO IDENTIFY ANY NEW LONG-TERM TREND.

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--(C) DETECTED NO SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN EMPHASIS SINCE

THE NPC.

--(D) FOUND THAT THE VOLUME OF ANTI-US PROPAGANDA INCREASED IN RESPONSE TO IMPORTANT EXTERNAL EVENTS, SUCH AS THE CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN CAMBODIA, BUT THAT IT SUBSIDED ONCE THE EVENT PASSED.

2. WHAT PEKING HAS NOT SAID IS AS INTERESTING AS WHAT IT HAS. PRC MEDIA HAVE:

--(A) REFRAINED FROM COMMENTING ON PRESIDENT NIXON'S RESIGNATION LAST SUMMER, OR FROM INDICATING CONCERN AS TO WHETHER PRESIDENT FORD WOULD CONTINUE HIS PREDECESSOR'S FOREIGN POLICIES;

--(B) AVOIDED CRITICISM OF THE US POSITION ON CYPRUS OR OF US PEACE MOVES IN THE MIDDLE EAST, INSTEAD PICTURING THE AMERICAN "STEP-BY-STEP" APPROACH AS DOMINANT;

--(C) OMITTED REFERENCE TO "FOREIGN INTERFERENCE" IN TAIWAN, WHILE EMPHASIZING THE DESIRE FOR A POLITICAL RATHER THAN A MILITARY SETTLEMENT OF THE ISSUE;

--(D) CONFINED THEIR ORIGINAL COMMENTARY ON VLADIVOSTOK TO A SINGLE ARTICLE WHICH ALLUDED TO "SCRAPS OF PAPER";

--(E) CARRIED NO PERSONAL CRITICISM OF PRESIDENT FORD OR SECRETARY KISSINGER.

3. MEDIA DISCUSSION OF THE US AND THE USSR HAS STRONGLY CRITICIZED THE USSR BUT DEPICTED THE US IN RELATIVELY PRO FORMA TERMS. FOR EXAMPLE, NCNA ON MARCH 12 REPORTED TENG HSIAO-P'ING'S SPEECH AT A BANQUET HONORING PRIME MINISTER BURNHAM OF GUYANA:

"THE SUPERPOWER THAT LONG PLAYED THE TYRANT IN LATIN AMERICA IS CONTINUING TO MAKE TROUBLE, BUT IT IS ESPECIALLY THE OTHER SUPERPOWER, WHICH FLAUNTS THE BANNER OF 'SOCIALISM,' THAT IS STEPPING UP ITS INFILTRATION AND EXPANSION IN
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LATIN AMERICA UNDER THE GUISE OF 'SUPPORT' AND 'AID.'"

4. THE PRC'S SHARPEST PUBLIC CRITICISM OF THE US SINCE PRESIDENT FORD TOOK OFFICE CAME DURING THE UN DEBATES ON KOREA AND CAMBODIA LAST FALL.

--(A) A COMMENTATOR ARTICLE IN THE DECEMBER 12 PEOPLE'S

DAILY SPOKE OF THE UNITED STATES' "CRIMINAL INTENTION TO OBSTRUCT THE INDEPENDENCE AND PEACEFUL REUNIFICATION OF

KOREA AND TO DIVIDE KOREA PERMANENTLY." THE ARTICLE CALLED ON THE US TO "WITHDRAW ITS TROOPS FROM SOUTH KOREA, CEASE PROVIDING MILITARY AID TO THE PAK CHONG-HUI CLIQUE, AND STOP CONNIVANCE WITH THE PROVOCATIONS CARRIED OUT BY THE SOUTH KOREAN AUTHORITIES AGAINST THE NORTHERN PART OF THE REPUBLIC." AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, PRC MEDIA REFRAINED FROM REPORTING THE MORE VIRULENT NORTH KOREAN ATTACKS ON THE US RESOLUTION.

--(B) A COMMENTATOR ARTICLE IN THE DECEMBER 1 PEOPLE'S DAILY CLAIMED THAT "THE UNITED STATES SPARED NO EFFORT TO MAKE TROUBLE...RESORT TO ACTS OF SABOTAGE...AND...MAKE USE OF THE UN TO INTERFERE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF CAMBODIA. THIS IS A NEW UNDISGUISED HOSTILITY OF THE UNITED STATES TOWARD THE CAMBODIAN PEOPLE." THE ARTICLE DEPICTED THE US AS "A SUPERPOWER WHICH WANTONLY CARRIES OUT SUBVERSIVE AND AGGRESSIVE ACTIVITIES AGAINST A SOVEREIGN STATE OF THE THIRD WORLD...SO AS TO LEGALIZE US IMPERIALIST AGGRESSION AND INTERFERENCE IN CAMBODIA AND MAKE THE CAMBODIAN PEOPLE ACCEPT AN 'AMERICAN PEACE.' THIS SCHEME WILL NEVER SUCCEED."

5. MOST PRC REPORTING ON THE CURRENT CAMBODIAN SITUATION HAS BEEN LOW-KEY AND FACTUAL, BUT TWO RECENT ITEMS HAVE DIRECTLY CRITICIZED THE US POSITION.

--(A) A COMMENTATOR ARTICLE IN THE MARCH 9 PEOPLE'S DAILY DECRIED THE "FUTILE (US) EFFORT" OF CALLING FOR COMPROMISE, ADDITIONAL AID, AND THE AIRLIFT. CITING "DECEITFUL TALK," COMMENTATOR CLAIMED THAT "IF THE US

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REALLY WANTS TO SOLVE THE CAMBODIAN QUESTION, IT WILL BE A VERY SIMPLE MATTER. ALL IT HAS TO DO IS TO STOP AT ONCE ALL ITS ACTS OF INTERFERENCE AND AGGRESSION AGAINST CAMBODIA."

--(B) NCNA ON MARCH 16 ACCUSED THE US OF "STILL HOLDING FAST TO ITS POLICY OF INTERVENTION AND AGGRESSION AGAINST CAMBODIA...IN A VAIN ATTEMPT TO SAVE THE TRAITOROUS LON NOL CLIQUE." THE ARTICLE CHARGED THAT PRESIDENT FORD'S MARCH 6 AND MARCH 12 STATEMENTS "EXPOSED ONCE MORE THE US GOVERNMENT'S STUBBORN STAND OF PERSISTING IN INTERFERENCE AND COMMITTING AGGRESSION AGAINST CAMBODIA." INGERSOLL

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